Theory of the Collective Consciousness of the Monads

I have put forward the foregoing interpretation of the relations of dominance and subordination between monad-systems and of the communications between them as being a well-founded and tenable answer to the great problem of the unity in multiplicity of our mental activities. But I am constrained to admit that a rival hypothesis deserves attention. Under the foregoing scheme, the consciousness called by each one of us * my consciousness * is that of the unitary monad which dominates the whole hierarchy of monads; and, if it is asked : Why is such self-consciousness unitary and continuous, claiming self-identity from one period of life to another, covering not only successive moments, but also days, months, and years ? the answer is: Because the monad is a unitary psychic being.

Under the alternative hypothesis (which I venture to suggest is the only workable alternative) the unitary consciousness of the Ego is a collective consciousness, the product of a fusion of the conscious activities of many monads. The hypothesis of collective consciousness is one which I have always found great difficulty in entertaining. Yet many authors have found reason to adopt it, and I have to admit that there are strong grounds for accepting it. These are of two principal kinds. Let us glance briefly at both of them, trying to avoid yielding to the natural prejudices against such evidences which most of us probably harbour.

activity. The *Gestalt* principle of isomorphism postulates such unity; but there is much to be said against isomorphism, and little evidence to support it. **Cf.** my articles : ' Dynamics of the Gestalt Psychology/ and ' Character and Personality/ 1935-